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Here comes Santa Claus
Ezra Horsley waits while his older sister meets with Santa during the Rotary Community Christmas Party at the Legion on Friday night. /ADAM FRISK staff

Council looks to fast-track crosswalk near Hook Line & Sinker

ADAM FRISK
Journalist

The Municipality of Dysart et al wants to prioritize pedestrian safety over vehicle flow on Highland Street, following a recent traffic operations study.

The study was initiated by council back in May and focused on the area between York Street and the government dock boat launch.

Council directed staff to provide engineering costs for the rehabilitation of Highland Street, including a provision for a pedestrian crossover at the public dock parking lot entrance, directly across the street from Hook Line & Sinker restaurant.

In his report to council, the director of public works, Rob Camelon, said the traffic survey warranted traffic lights at the Highland Street and York Street/Cedar Avenue intersection, but only for the weekday peak hour.

"So there is a delay for traffic

see CROSSWALK page 13

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County council approves 2026 budget

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Stormy winter weather forced the Dec. 10 regular meeting of county council to shift exclusively to an online platform.

Warden Dave Burton efficiently hopped right into the meeting, bringing forth the finance department's budget update and approval request. "At council's direction, staff have updated the 2026 budget to reflect the council liaisons' recommendations," said Andrea Robinson, the director of corporate services for the county.

Robinson presented a budget of $26,846,055, which is an increase of $1,860,313 from 2025 and results in a tax rate increase of 4.38 per cent. With the addition of 1.5 per cent for capital levy and 0.5 per cent for the community health and well being levy, results in a total cost to the ratepayer of $17.15 per $100,000 of assessment.

Revisions to the original presented budget on Nov. 26 - as per recommendation from council liaisons and county council - include the following:

- Decrease the sustainable roads infrastructure program by $500,000
- Decrease the Haliburton County Public Library levy contribution by $336,258
- Fully fund the new Cybersecurity analyst from the county levy, addition of $62,687
- Adjust the new GIS technologist from a permanent full time position to a seven-month contract, decrease of $18,987
- Removal of the Industrial Park Road intersection project, deemed to be a 2027 project, zero levy impact
- Decrease of City of Kawartha Lakes ask by $69,461

Robinson noted that based on the discussions at the Nov. 26 meeting, staff are requesting the grant writer/procurement specialist position continue to be included on an 18-month contract, with the intent of this position bringing in new grant monies, at a minimum, to offset any levy impact.

"This grant writer position," asked county councillor Murray Fearrey, the mayor of Dysart et al. "Does she do anything else besides write grants? That doesn't seem like a full time job to me, but I could be wrong."

Robinson clarified that the position will also be designed to "fill in the gaps" for the procurement services as well. "We are also seeing a need for more procurement within corporate services. She confirmed that if the role is not deemed useful in 18 months, the position will be terminated.

Councillor Jennifer Dailloux, the deputy mayor for Algonquin Highlands and vice-chair of the library board, spoke on behalf of the library budget. "It had been my hope to bring forward a counter proposal to the library budget," she noted. "One that would achieve the goals set out by the county liaisons, but set a less dangerous precedent for the library stake in the levy moving forward."

Dailloux shared that when the idea was raised to present alternative options for the library budget through a special meeting of the library board, the idea was shut down. "I'm not sure what the harm would have been in exploring the merits of counter proposal," she said. "I think it would have been in the best interest of the library and the county to have that discussion, even if the outcome had been the same."

At the special meeting of the library board on Dec. 10, a moderated model of spending the reserves and surplus gradually was presented as an option. While the members of the public on the board voted in favour of this suggestion, sitting council members on the board, including Walt McKechnie, Lisa Schell, and Cec Ryall, and Dave Burton, voted in opposition to the moderated model. Due to the fact that the vote was split, those opposed are named the winners, based on procedural bylaw.

As a result, Dailloux voiced her opposition to the presented budget at the Dec. 10 council meeting.

County CAO Gary Dyke clarified that the library board had a chance to respond to the budget suggestions. "They had the opportunity to delegate today," he shared. "If that was their direction, so I appreciate your comments, councillor, but I think it's important for everyone to know that it's not like they were denied the opportunity to respond should they have chosen to do so."

Dailloux noted that members of the public on the library board were in favour of coming forward with alternative budget recommendations, but it was the members of county council sitting on the board who voted against the change.

Warden Dave Burton requested a formal vote on the budget recommendations for 2026, which was carried seven to one, with Councillor Dailloux as the only one opposed.

With this motion, the 2026 budget was formally approved, with the proposed rates being set in the new year.

Grade 8 Experience Day

Students from Archie Stouffer Elementary School and Wilberforce Elementary School had the opportunity earlier this month to experience what awaits them as they prepare for high school next year. Grade 8 students took in a variety of classes at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School including courses to the likes of art, wood shop and the culinary arts. /ADAM FRISK staff

County tourism looks ahead to 2026

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

As the year winds down and we prepare for 2026, it's a good time to look back on the successes of the past and the plans for the future.

Haliburton County Manager of Tourism Angelica Ingram brought a glimpse of the highs and lows of the past year to county council during their regular meeting on Dec. 10.

"In 2025, we did a lot of data and research into trying to figure out exactly who some of our target markets are for visitation," opened Ingram, "and how we can better reach those markets."

While Ingram noted that there were not a lot of surprises in their findings, they did find some key markets to target their advertising efforts towards. Primarily, folks are drawn to the Haliburton Highlands for nature-based amenities, such as lakes, forests, trails, and opportunities for boating, hiking, and outdoor recreation.

It was noted that some were also seeking the "cottage country vibe", which includes relaxing, unwinding, and getting together with friends and family.

The arts were also a draw. "There is a notable arts scene (galleries, artisan studios, events, local markets)," shared Ingram in her council presentation, "which appeals to a segment of visitors looking for more than just outdoor recreation."

Ingram noted that they used this data to create targeted ads to reach people looking for these experiences in nearby visiting locations. "We believe this was successful," she said, "and we are trying to continue to monitor this travel patterns and demographics for future marketing in 2026 and beyond."

Looking back on 2025, Ingram shared that they measured a successful summer and fall season for tourism, with weather causing a few hiccups in winter and spring marketing, including the ice storm that slammed the county in April.

She also noted successes with Hike Haliburton, which received a FedDev grant of $25,000 to bolster programming and events around the festival.

Looking ahead to 2026, Ingram shared that the tourism department intends to strengthen already-existing relationships and dynamics with local organizations and businesses. She noted some partnerships with local Rotary Clubs, the BIA, the Chamber of Commerce, Ontario Highlands Tourism Organization, and Destination Ontario, to name a few.

Projects and priorities for 2026 include advertising, publications, and moving ahead with an advanced destination management plan. The original plan came out in 2020, and looked ahead for five years down the road. With a new year on the horizon, the tourism department would like to invest in a new plan, building on the ideas and suggestions brought forth from the original plan. "We can look at what's working and what's not working with the current plan," said Ingram, "and then we can move forward."

The county also intends to add branded maps and signage to each municipality, a project separate from the municipal wayfinding signage initiative. Ingram added that website updates are required for both the My Haliburton Highlands site, as well as the Hike Haliburton site.

With it being the first year of the municipal accommodation tax (MAT), Ingram shared that the tourism department will be seeking the best allocation of the funds collected from the newly-implemented tax, and how they can benefit tourism initiatives across the county.

County Councillor Liz Danielsen, the mayor of Algonquin Highlands, sought clarification on how much had been brought in through the municipal accommodation tax, to which Ingram noted there would be exact numbers shared in the new year.

Bob Carter, county councillor and mayor of Minden Hills, brought up alternative forms of tourism, such as hockey teams and travelling groups exploring the region. He was curious about whether county tourism liaises with those organizations to maximize their time in the region.

Ingram shared that partnerships have been made with travelling teams, as well as school groups visiting the area. "We're always looking for further relationships in this," she said. "It's sometimes harder to find these groups. It's easier when they come to us and they reach out to us, which has happened, and we're happy to work with them. We're happy to promote the area in any way we can."

Former B112 trail to remain closed

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

This past week, the Ontario Government has expressed its support towards our local snowmobiling clubs.

Snowmobiling continues to be one of Ontario's most popular winter activities, bringing in thousands of tourists each winter to the county.

On Dec. 4, Ric Breese, parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation said that they had received concerns from the Ontario Federation of Snowmobiling Clubs (OFSC). To ensure safety, reliability, and readiness for the season, the provincial government committed $4.9 million towards local snowmobiling clubs.

Earlier this year, the Ministry of Transportation denied the club-approved trail permit price increase. This led to shortfalls and cutbacks from snowmobiling clubs across the province.

As a result, the OFSC announced their plans to cut costs to stay afloat. The organization announced cuts to 5,000 kilometres of trails and 50 groomers across Ontario. Dead end trails and low-use trails were prioritized for the chopping block.

This October, the Haliburton County Snowmobile Association (HCSA) announced that 42 kilometres of trails will not be open this year.

The slashed trail was the TOP B112 northbound, from Fleming Road in Minden northerly across Highway 118 to TOP B west of Pine Springs.

Neil Vanderstoop, president of the HCSA said that the trail has become unmaintainable since it has become shredded up by Jeeps and other off road vehicles. After putting out tens of thousands of dollars to repair a bridge along the trail, the club decided to close the trail to snowmobilers this season.

After the announcement of support from the Ontario Government, Vanderstoop says that the HCSA is sticking to their decision of not reopening the trail from Minden to Pine Springs this season.

"We did lose a groomer before this announcement and I am told we are not getting it back," said Vanderstoop.

The HCSA are determined to make this season great for riding. With their four remaining groomers, they will take care of the trails that attract tourists to our beautiful countryside.

More information to follow as the story develops.

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Ringing in the holidays

Haliburton Rotary hosted its free Rotary Community Christmas Party on Friday night, where residents enjoyed free skating at the arena before enjoying some pizza and sugary treats at the Haliburton Legion. Santa Claus also made an appearance, and children had photos taken with Saint Nick and received a gift from the man of the hour. /ADAM FRISK staff

A child skates during the free Rotary Community Christmas Party.

Musical entertainment was provided during the event.

Rotarians serve up some sugary treats during the free Rotary Community Christmas Party at the Legion.

Sawyer Cox, 5, enjoys a slice of pizza.

Santa Claus arrives at the party.

Busy year for Dysart fire department

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

The Municipality of Dysart et al fire department continues to see a significant increase in demand for its services, despite a slight dip in calls last month, according to the fire chief.

During last week's council meeting, Fire Chief Dan Chumbley said that while the number of calls for service for November was slightly lower than the same month last year, the department's long-term trend showed a substantial rise in activity.

"We are still in the long-term trend of being well over last year's numbers," the chief said. "I'm quite confident that with three weeks left, we've had more than 500 call-outs for this year."

Mayor Murray Fearrey asked what the contributing factors were for the increase in calls this year. The fire chief attributed the spike in calls to a particularly dry fall, citing a busy October that was comparable to a dry stretch in August.

"The month of October in particular was more calls because of the dry weather ... We did have several fires and that took a lot of man-hours for the month of October," he explained.

In addition to weather-related incidents, the department noted changes in the overall nature of their service calls with the increase in hydro and alarm calls. Medical calls still account for a significant portion of the workload, sitting at about 40 per cent of total requirements. Although this percentage had seen a slight reduction since the implementation of the new Medical Priority Dispatch System.

Chumbley said the department was pleased with the successful recruitment and onboarding of four new volunteer firefighters in November.

"Happy to be able to announce that there's still lots of interest in joining our volunteer fire department and working with the community," he said.

Jacob Dobson, Spencer Mitchell, Nathan Morrison, and Ryan Preston were commended for actively participating in calls and practices, the chief said.

"They've all made a pretty good job of coming out for calls and practices already. Happy to be able to say that," Chumbley said.

Council again defers controversial shoreline structure amendments

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

Dysart et al council once again voted to defer proposed amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw concerning accessory buildings within the minimum water setback, pushing the debate to a third public meeting in January.

The deferral came during a public meeting last week, after the director of planning and land information, Jeff Iles, presented another staff report and provided more feedback on the municipality's response since the public meeting in November.

The Dec. 9 meeting reviewed policy adjustments made after earlier council direction. The changes to the proposed shoreline policy include only allowing gazebos and storage sheds within the water setback. Sheds would only be permitted on lots with a minimum slope of 15 per cent. Both gazebos and storage sheds must be at least five metres from the water, while the design, including exterior colour, must "blend with natural surroundings" and be "screened from the view from the lake and neighbouring property."

Iles told council that the municipality received nine new comments from concerned residents and cottage associations, with a majority opposed to the proposed amendments.

Lipsey Lake Cottage Owner Association was among the new letters addressed to council and expressed "strong opposition" to any changes, warning that allowing structures near the "fragile shoreline" would affect the lake, which is a key habitat for several fish and bat species. The association went on to argue that allowing development in the "ribbon of life" will lead to algae blooms and further harm wildlife.

Vice president of Kennisis Lake Cottage Owners Association, Jim Prince, suggested that "an education program about the rules for shoreline structures in Dysart would have been a much better investment" and noted that the amendments would not solve the apparent persistent problem of illegal structures and compliance complaints.

Bitter Lake property owner Petra Hamann supported the original amendments that included saunas, arguing that all three structures (sheds, saunas, and gazebos) have comparable environmental profiles when placed responsibly within natural vegetation.

"These structures are small, low-impact, and do not meaningfully affect lake health or shoreline vegetation," Hamann wrote in a letter to council. "Their environmental footprint is minimal - no different in practice from placing a deck box near the water."

A key issue that prompted the staff recommendation for deferral was that Harcourt Park requested a process allowing their leaseholders to apply for site plan agreements without burdening the corporation with approval or registering the agreement on the entire property title.

"It does add liability to them," the director of planning and land information said.

Iles said that staff would consult with the municipal solicitor and Harcourt Park to find a solution that allows the agreement to "carry forward with the leasehold, not the land."

Another issue was that recent amendments to the Planning Act, removed the municipality's approval or right to address exterior design of residential buildings, including accessory buildings.

"This is something that is included in the policies today," Iles said. "So, staff recommend deferral so that I can amend those policies."

Council subsequently passed a resolution to defer the proposed Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendments, directing staff to bring the file back for consideration at a public meeting in January.

Second bid for EV chargers approved for Highlands East

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

Local electric vehicle (EV) drivers may soon have more charging options in Highlands East after council approved a renewed application for provincial grant funding to install new EV charging stations across the municipality.

Council decided last week to apply for the competitive EV ChargeON Program, a fund delivered by the Ontario Vehicle Innovation Network in collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation.

Should the funding be secured, the municipality plans to install a total of six Level 2 charging ports, two chargers per location, at Herlihey Park, Gooderham Community Centre, and Cardiff Community Centre.

"Currently, Highlands East has limited EV charging infrastructure, with only one station located in Wilberforce," Brittany McCaw, CAO and treasurer, said in her report to council. "Adding these new locations would expand access for residents and visitors across the municipality."

This is the second time the municipality has sought funding for these specific locations, following an unsuccessful bid in 2024. Staff highlighted the program's highly competitive nature, with both public and private organizations seeking funding.

"Municipalities are eligible to receive 75 per cent of their total project costs if their populations are under 170,000," McCaw explained.

Staff estimated that the cost for the three locations would be about $120,000. If the application is successful, the municipality would receive a post-construction rebate of up to $90,000, leaving the local contribution at approximately $30,000. The funds would need to be put forward and then be reimbursed by the province.

The rationale for selecting the three specific locations is the potential for economic spinoffs, the CAO explained.

"The idea behind it is that while vehicles are charging, drivers may get out, they may explore some local shops and attractions while they're here in Highlands East," McCaw said.

However, Deputy Mayor Cecil Ryall raised a question about the potential return on investment.

"Putting a charger at the community centre, it doesn't seem to be a very populated area, how much is it going to get used?" he asked.

McCaw explained that the new chargers would operate on a fee-for-service model to generate revenue and offset costs. The locations near park areas were chosen to encourage drivers to get out of their vehicles and walk around, she added.

Council voted to submit a grant application, with funding decisions expected in the coming months. The municipality currently operates one EV charging station located at the arena.

Have a thought, comment or opinion you'd like to share?

Send a letter to the editor to
emily@haliburtonpress.com

points of view

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The cost of living

Editorial

Emily Stonehouse

I WATCHED as our county council spoke in circles around budget spikes. A percentage knocked off here and there, capital projects put on the back burner for another year in an effort to keep the tax levy low, and still, not everyone happy with the outcome.

I don't think it's possible to make a budget where everyone is happy. If you did, you probably did something wrong along the way.

And I appreciate the effort that our county council liaisons made to keep our taxes low. While some departments seem to be prioritized over others, such is the nature of these conversations. And at the end of the day, that tiny percentage is what rules the decisions.

It's a tough situation to be in. In order to have more, we must spend more. In order to afford more, we must have less. A vicious cycle of forever chasing that carrot dangled right in front of our noses.

But if we take off our glasses that focus on the minutiae of municipalities, and the doubled-down efforts to finalize budgets on multiple tiers (I hear things may be easier if we all worked as one, but that's an editorial for another day), we have to look at the big picture.

Minimum wage is set at a provincial level. As of Oct. 1 this year, Doug Ford and his pals set the rate to $17.60/hour. For those under 18, saving up to go to school, the rate is $16.60/hour.

Apparently, the amount reflects Ontario's yearly inflation adjustment, placing it amongst the higher provincial minimum wages in Canada. Is it just me, or is something not quite adding up there?

A living wage is something entirely different, and captures the hourly amount a worker must earn to cover their basic expenses and participate in their community, based on the actual cost of living in a specific location. A living wage is a voluntary effort made by an employer, as opposed to the mandated provincial minimum wage.

While the living wage is measured against provincial needs, the amount varies based on the region. In Toronto, the living wage is nearly $30/hour, whereas in Haliburton County, the living wage has been identified as $22.20/hour.

A notable jump over the current minimum wage that hovers below $20, and has for quite some time.

So while our county councillors and staff present their big ticket items that will increase our tax rate, we have to look at the big picture. It's a well-known fact that inflation will continue to kick some of those price points up the ladder.

But why aren't we able to climb the ladder to keep up? As we seek to grow as a community, as a region, the constant tug of the affordability current will keep us underwater if our standard minimum wage rate continues to differ from an evolving living wage necessity.

I think it's admirable that councillors in our community take these tax hikes into consideration, albeit at the cost of some programs and initiatives.

But if our wages started to reflect our needs, perhaps those efforts that make our community vibrant wouldn't so often be taken to the chopping block.

We are at a stage in our economic world where choices are made, just trying to stay afloat in a current that is washing so many away.

Take a good look at who you are voting for at each level. Are they prioritizing our ability to continue to climb the ladder, or are they just dangling the carrot in front of our noses?

Because as we tread water in an economy that continues to swirl around us, pretty soon, we will have to come up for air.

Coercive control, MAID and dementia

Poke, Peel Pair, Ponder

Fay Martin

HERE'S A conversation you might have with your loved ones over the holidays: do you think that people with dementia should be eligible to make advance requests for MAID?

(Advance requests are the ability of a person to negotiate 'when my condition gets to x, I want out of this life'.)

First the Coles notes for context: This debate has been ricocheting around the federal government since 2016 when legislation permitting Medical Assistance in Dying (MAD) was initially passed. The three key elements were serious and incurable illness, foreseeable death by natural causes, and intolerable suffering. The immediate eligibility carve-outs were mature minors and mental illness.

The field was further confused when Quebec in 2019 removed reasonably foreseeable death as a necessary condition. The federal government in 2021 followed suit, but maintained the exclusion of mental health and mature minors, setting a two-year limit on making legislative changes to address the outstanding questions. A year later, the recommendation was that no legal changes were needed, punting the debate into the pragmatic world. This resulted in repeated extensions; March 2027 is now the date by which legislation must grasp this thistle.

And thorny thistle it indeed is, because of the vulnerability of persons with mental illness to credibly defend themselves. How can an external person judge how intolerable the pain of chronic depression is? How long must a person suffer before their mental condition is determined to be incurable? Is permitting death letting society off the hook for not providing appropriate care?

The dementia issue is even thornier. It is at present incurable. We have no reliable way of determining if it causes intolerable suffering. Furthermore, the condition is by its nature variable within an overall decline, so deciding when the moment of intolerability has been reached is a judgement call – and if advance requests are permitted, the call must be made by someone other than the person whose death it is. Additionally, they must interpret instructions about the manifestations of a disease about which very little is known for sure, including by the person who gave the instructions.

In earlier reading, I came across a physician who had provided euthanasia in the Netherlands since it became legal in 2002. She said definitively that dementia would never be a basis for assisted death because of the moral threat to the physicians who bore responsibility for making the decision. When I think about what is involved in deciding to put a beloved pet down, I have empathy. Enough to absolve doctors of this burden? Perhaps.

The debate about dementia and MAD will come around this time from the perspective of vulnerability, in the context of a new bill about coercive control of intimate partners. The Elder Justice Coalition is mounting a campaign to ensure that elder abuse is given consideration because it occurs 'within relationships of trust and dependence'. The Coalition considers people with dementia to be especially vulnerable. Access to MAD by advance request is off the table until there is assurance that it cannot be abused.

Wow! This dilemma gives me excessive cause for thought. How many people have said to me or in my hearing that if they get 'like that', referencing advanced dementia, they want to be put out of their misery, e.g. have access to MAD? I have even said that of myself, many times.

I feel very strongly that I do not want to be an unbearable burden on my friends and family. But what constitutes an 'unbearable burden'? Whose definition prevails? Probably not mine, depending on how comfortable I am with my dependency of the moment. How I am dependent and for how long. Whether I think I'll improve. Whether my cognitive function is up to keeping track of time (unlikely; it's wobbly even now).

And if not my judgement, whose? Presumably my caregiver. There's merit in that. I could say my right to dependency ends when it impinges unfairly on the quality of life of another. If I'm fortunate enough that my caregiver knows and loves me, or at least feels a strong sense of duty toward me, that'll buy me a fair runway of dependency. But for how long? And what constitutes my caregiver's good-enough quality of life?

And what if I don't have caregivers who can make more or less free choices about giving of their time and energy - what if I'm dependent on the public purse? What if my caregiving is expensive and my heirs want to spend their/my money another way? Or what if my personal caregiver is not well suited to the job and punishes me for being what I have become (and maybe for what I was before dementia)?

We need answers to those questions – or at least clear guidance about what the answer must entail – before we give free rein to the power to end life.

Enjoy the conversation.

points of view

Man-crowaves

I AM nothing if not a keen observer of the human condition. For instance, I was among the first to notice that no one ever has an umbrella when they really need one. If I recall correctly, I was admiring a statue in a pigeon-infested park when I came up with that one.

My latest observation occurred under similarly stressful conditions – Jenn bought a new microwave.

Like all new microwaves, ours is adorned with many mysterious and, quite possibly, dangerous buttons. For instance, it has one labelled "potato" – whatever that means.

I am guessing that this is some sort of microwave term that indicates you want to get something so hot that you can't even hold it in your hand – similar to a hot potato I imagine – though I am still unsure what that thing might be. There is another button labelled "Beverage" but no matter how many times I put an empty cup in the microwave and press that button, when I bring the cup out, it is still empty. Similarly, if you put an empty bowl in and press the Popcorn button, it doesn't seem to work.

Steve Galea

Loon Tales

I will concede, this is probably due, in some small part at least, to my lack of understanding when it comes to microwaves and/or manuals.

I have come a long way though. When they first were introduced, I thought a microwave was a quick and tiny wave of the hand.

Admittedly, this turned out to be embarrassing, especially when my co-workers told me I could only use the microwave in the office kitchen. But the good news is that I now know otherwise.

I don't believe I am all that different from other men in my understanding of microwave use. Which is to say, I am confident I know how to use one almost intuitively – and I have only blown up two or three.

As every man my age knows, it boils down to this.

You put whatever you want to reheat or defrost in it. You press the number buttons until you get a number that "looks about right." Then you press start.

Then, and here's the fun part, you wait for the beep.

Oh sure, there are other buttons that are probably useful too, but why complicate things?

This has got me thinking though. So, I'm just going to put this out there.

Why hasn't any company invented a mancrowave?

The way I envision it, this would be a microwave with just some numbers and a start button. And, instead of a beep, you could have a voice that says, "I know you just sat down, but come and get it!"

I'm certain they would sell among men of my demographic.

As regular readers of this column have probably surmised by now, I don't normally put my genius on this page. But in this case, I am placing my idea out there because patents are so expensive.

Yup, if any company wants to manufacture the mancrowave, feel free to contact me and I will tell you more about it. I have some really good ideas about this. Hint: it's going to include a racing stripe and an interior paint job that mimics and exploded pizza.

Hopefully, someone in the industry will read this column and contact me soon. If so, maybe next year, I will be writing this column as "Inventor of the mancrowave."

In the meantime, does anyone know how to microwave a potato?

pic *of the* past

JACK AND MAY Emmerson Farm on the Old Donald Road1934-35. Photo taken by Wilts McElwain. Submitted by Bill McElwain.

Alignment

WE ARE all given one body. While we can replace or repair certain parts, in the end we live in one living, breathing organism that carries us through this life. This body is who we are, and caring for it to the best of our ability allows us to live the life we want.

There are many ways to compose a good life, and for me, yoga, meditation, and qigong are essential practices that support that process. They help me live my best life. In yoga, one of the first things we learn in every pose is to find the foundation. The earth. We move in relationship to the ground beneath us, feeling its support and steadiness.

This connection grounds us, reminding us that we are held. From this foundation, we begin to align our bodies to the best of our ability. By alignment, I mean setting the body up in its natural, neutral posture. This begins with positioning the pelvis, which then allows the legs and spine to align naturally. When the body is aligned, many systems begin to function more efficiently. We can breathe more freely, digest food more easily, and move through the world with greater confidence.

Alignment allows us to avoid being stuck in extremes - neither a permanent back bend nor a constant forward bend. Instead, we learn how to return to neutral, a place of balance and ease. Once we have established our foundation and alignment, we can pause and take a few breaths. In this stillness, we notice what is revealed to us. This is the practice of awareness.

When the body is aligned, we may notice a deep sense of calm, quiet, or peace that already exists within us. We do not need to search for peace or chase after it. It is always present. Our job is simply to notice it, to feel it, and to allow it to surface. Poor posture often creates unnecessary gripping or collapsing in the body, which can leave us feeling uncomfortable, restless, or emotionally unsettled. When the body struggles, the mind often follows.

Yoga, qigong, and meditation invite us to use movement, stillness, and breath to realign ourselves so we can pay attention to what is revealed within. Alignment looks different depending on whether we are standing, sitting, or lying on our belly. Practitioners of these modalities become skilled at curiosity and kind awareness, bringing attention to every cell, every muscle, and every bone. The whole system matters. We want every part of ourselves to be healthy, strong, and supported - aligned not only physically, but also with the goodness within us and the goodness around us. Perhaps this is the foundation of good health. Maybe we all need to pause several times each day to realign ourselves. As Anthony Goldsmith says, "Better structure, better alignment send better signals to the brain. When you align yourself, you will feel more grounded, calm, and confident."

Tales from the great

Lynda Shadbolt

Green meadow

letters to the editor

Hats off to housing

To the Editor,

Kudos to Kawartha Housing Corp for amazing progress on the project on Hwy 35 next to the Legion. It took a long while coming but is a welcome addition to local social housing -and it looks un-institutional, which is lovely!

Fay Martin,
Minden

Letters to the Editor note: Submissions are subject to editing for newspaper style and punctuation.

Giving back

The Friendship Force Club donated over $5,000 to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation last week. Pictured, Judy Neimann, Rhonda Elstone, Gay Marie Paige, Joan Hawley, Brian and Sharon Sachs, Bob Cole, founder, Elli Armstrong, Sandra Duchene, Melanie Klodt Wong, ED HHHSF. Not pictured: Cathy Boake, Dave Williamson, Janice MacGuigan, Marilyn Burton, Victoria Bingham. /submitted

Community Christmas dinner at the SIRCH Bistro

The holidays mean many things to many people - but one thing they should always include is a sense of connection. This Christmas Day, our table is open, and there's a seat just for you.

Whether you're spending the day on your own, new to the community, missing someone, or simply hoping to share a warm meal with friendly faces, we invite you to join us for a free family-style Christmas dinner - turkey and all the fixings.

We want this to feel like a true community table. To keep things fair and welcoming for everyone, meals will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis (we'll have enough for about 100 guests).

This is an eat-in, shared meal, so we can enjoy Christmas together.

Doors open at noon and we'll serve until 6 p.m., or until the food is gone. Dinner is free. Donations are welcome but never expected. The event is sponsored by Todd's Independent

Come as you are.

Date: Thursday, Dec. 25

Time: Dinner served from noon to 6 p.m.

Location: SIRCH Bistro & Bakery, 49 Maple Ave, Haliburton

Share in the warmth, the food, and the company.

We'd be honoured to spend Christmas with you.

Everyone is welcome, and everyone belongs.

For more information, call 705-457-1742 or visit www.sirch.on.ca

Submitted

Fast Lane Monday Afternoon Bowling League

The Fast Lane Top Bowling Scores Dec. 8

Women

High Single
Clara Vuksic 233
High Single with Handicap
Clara Vuksic 281
High Triple
Clara Vuksic 537
High Triple with Handicap
Clara Vuksic 681

Men

High Single
Marty Schuster 222
High Single with Handicap
Marty Schuster 265
High Triple
Marty Schuster 613
High Triple with Handicap
Marty Schuster 742

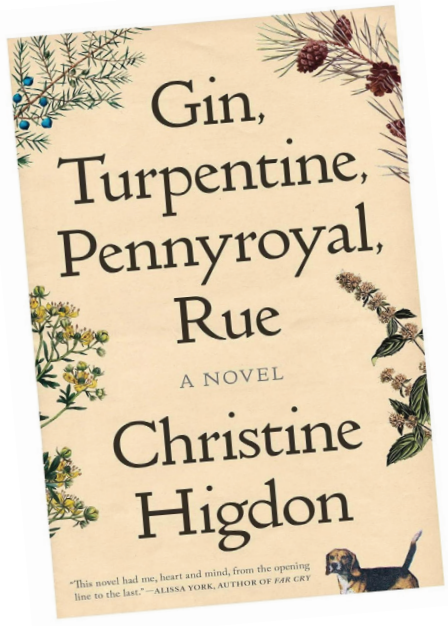
New bowlers are welcome to join!

Minden Memories

The second woman from the left was identified as Mrs. Kent, and the fourth as Mrs. Miles Henderson. This photo is from a collection donated by Freda Kelly from Fenelon Falls. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week


Gin, Turpentine, Pennyroyal, Rue
A NOVEL
Christine Higdon
"This novel had me, heart and mind, from the opening line to the last." —ALISSA YORK, AUTHOR OF FAR CRY

Set in 1920s Vancouver, four working-class sisters struggle to rebuild their lives after World War I. Morag is pregnant and devoted to her husband. Georgina dreams of an education she can't yet have. Harriet-Jean cares for their addicted mother while hiding her love for another woman. And Isla, secretly pregnant and in love with her sister's husband, makes a desperate choice that nearly costs her life. As Isla's secret triggers a reckoning, the sisters confront the limits of love, loyalty, and survival in a world stacked against them.

Gin, Turpentine, Pennyroyal, Rue by Christine Higdon is available at the Haliburton County Public Library as a book or Book Club Set. Visit haliburtonlibrary.ca to place a hold or learn more.

Invasive species present real threat to Haliburton Forest

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

A close-up of the beech bark disease, which is rapidly spreading across the county. The impacts of the disease are irreversible once it has taken form. /submitted

It's no secret that the status of the environment is hobbling on unsteady ground.

But while climate change exists as an over-arching statement that references a variety of crises near and far, one particular concern is prevalent on a local stage: invasive species.

"Invasive species kill things, and they change the environment," said Malcolm Cockwell, the managing director for Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve. "And those are two different things."

One disease many will have likely heard of is the beech bark disease, where an invasive beech scale insect feeds on the bark of the tree, creating hollowed cracks that allow a native canker fungi to enter, killing the tree from the inside out.

Cockwell noted that the disease was first identified around 15 years ago locally, and started spreading about a decade ago. It originally started in Atlantic Canada, arriving from Europe just over a century ago. The insect is believed to have arrived on an ornamental plant or a palette of products before slowly but surely making its way west.

"It's not strictly human activity that moves these," said Cockwell, referencing birds and other insects that may carry it from place to place. "But once they're here, they're here."

At this point, the disease has decimated approximately 10 per cent of the trees around Haliburton Forest. And while that may not sound like a lot, it equates to approximately 10,000 acres. "It has an irreversible impact," said Cockwell. "You end up with these parts of the forest where nothing else can grow for 100 years."

One of the main concerns around beech trees going extinct is the caloric intake for the local bear population. Bears rely heavily on beech nuts for sustenance, and with the absence of the crucial food, Cockwell fears for increased risk of human and bear conflict.

> *"We are strongly encouraging people to get educated about environmental issues like invasive species.*
>
> — Malcolm Cockwell, Haliburton Forest

The shrivelled beech trees also form what Cockwell referred to as "zombie saplings", where the spreading tree creates offshoots which also carry the disease, and choke out the surrounding forest. "They will still be present," he said, "but they will become a highly invasive shrub."

When asked if climate change plays a direct role in the spread of invasive species, Cockwell noted that he is not entirely convinced. While there are a select few species that have changed in nature due to warming temperatures, there are not yet direct correlations between the two imminent threats. "I'm not really convinced climate change is at fault here," he said. "But we are strongly encouraging people to get educated about environmental issues like invasive species."

With the absence of a regional resource in terms of identifying and eradicating invasive species, Cockwell and the forestry staff at Haliburton Forest have naturally stepped into the role. "If you see something strange, take a picture and send it to us," he said. "We're happy to help identify it, as a public service."

Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve owns and operates over 250,000 acres of hardwood timberland in Ontario, including 100,000 acres of predominantly hardwood timberland in Haliburton County. The properties were the first in Canada to be certified as sustainable by the Forest Stewardship Council.

With the risk of invasive species looming with each cut tree, Cockwell noted that it's not just about the financial impact of losing acres of forest. "The economics is one piece of the puzzle," he said. "But that's not the whole picture."

When asked about the rate of invasive species spread, Cockwell noted that to the human eye, it may pass at a glacial pace, but to the rate for the forest, it's significantly faster. At the current rate of the beech bark disease spreading, it will take 20 years to create 500 years of irreversible damage to the local forests. "We're just starting to see the real, long-term impact these species will have," said Cockwell, "and it's terrible. There's really no good news on the invasive species front."

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Santa comes to Wilberforce

Residents braved the frigid weather on Sunday to take in the annual Wilberforce Santa Claus Parade. /ADAM FRISK staff

Tupper T. Turtle greets a child during the annual Wilberforce Santa Claus Parade on Sunday.

MP Jamie Schmale smiles at residents during the annual Wilberforce Santa Claus Parade on Sunday.

The man of the hour is all smiles.

People react as a decoration falls off a float during the annual Wilberforce Santa Claus Parade on Sunday. /ADAM FRISK staff

Ornament event open to Dorset seniors

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

Dorset seniors, it is time to get into the Christmas spirit.

This year, Muskoka Seniors is hosting the first ever DIY Christmas Ornament event. This event will let you make the perfect ornaments to hang on your Christmas tree.

Participants will be creating two different ornaments, says Andrea Monahan, social connections coordinator for Muskoa Seniors. One ornament will be a gnome made from a pinecone and the other will be a Christmas tree made from yarn.

Entirely free for seniors 60 years of age and older living in or around the Dorset area, this DIY Christmas Ornament event will be taking place on Dec. 18 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the Dorset Recreation Centre.

"We are looking forward to a good turnout and ideas for next year," said Monahan.

No crafting supplies are necessary. If you have your own glue gun, you are encouraged to bring it.

This crafting social event will be a perfect, cozy, social day where you can create something adorable for your tree.

Nothing beats a handmade Christmas gift for friends or family.

"Our social events help seniors come together, boost mood, and provide a sense of purpose. Some clients have mentioned that if they didn't have our social events to come to, then they would still be sitting at home, alone and may not have even gotten dressed," said Monahan. "Attending social programs helps create and maintain connections within the community, reduce isolation and helps seniors feel part of a group; having fun, laughing and engaging their brain and bodies in positive ways."

This DIY Christmas Ornament event will be Muskoka Seniors' last holiday-themed event of the year. In January, the organization will be hosting bingo at the Lake of Bays Library in Dwight and at the Dorset Recreation Centre on Jan. 8. On Jan. 22, Autumn Leaves will be hosting bingo in Baysville and there will be a watercolour greeting card event at the Dorset Recreation Centre.

Come on out and create your very own Christmas ornaments this Thursday to get into the holiday spirit, just like Monahan.

"My favourite thing about the holidays is getting together with friends and family," said Monahan. "I also love seeing the holiday spirit through my clients; wearing festive clothing and accessories and joining in festive activities like listening to live Christmas music, attending a Christmas lights tour as well as creating handmade Christmas ornaments."

HOLIDAY RECYCLING

Recycling for Containers

Rinse all containers and ensure they are clean of liquids or food

Aluminum foil and trays | Metal food cans | Beverage cartons | Plastic bottles (caps can be left on) | Plastic candy, fruit, veggie trays

Recycling for Papers

Paper gift wrap | Paper gift tags | Paper gift bags (remove string) | Christmas cards & envelopes | Cardboard rolls | Cardboard boxes (flatten)

Garbage

Metallic or foil wrapping paper | Ribbons, bows, tape | Styrofoam shipping block | Bubble wrap | Broken ornaments | Plastic toy packaging (hard-to-cut material)

Dysart Landfill Holiday Hours

Wednesday, December 24, 2025 (Christmas Eve)
8 AM to 12:30 PM: Haliburton
Closed: Harcourt, Kennisis Lake, West Bay, West Guilford

Thursday, December 25, 2025 (Christmas Day)
Closed: All Dysart Landfills

Friday, December 26, 2025 (Boxing Day)
10 AM to 5 PM: Haliburton, West Guilford
12 noon to 5 PM: Harcourt, Kennisis Lake, West Bay

Wednesday, December 31, 2025 (New Year's Eve)
8 AM to 12:30 PM: Haliburton
Closed: Harcourt, Kennisis Lake, West Bay, West Guilford

Thursday, January 1, 2026 (New Year's Day)
Closed: All Dysart Landfills

Friday, January 2, 2026
8 AM to 5 PM: Haliburton, West Guilford
Closed: Harcourt, Kennisis Lake, West Bay

Municipality of Dysart et al

www.dysartetal.ca
705-457-1740

Council settles on modular steel bridge for Head Lake Park

ADAM FRISK
Journalist

Residents can expect a significant budget reduction on the replacement of the Head Lake Park pedestrian bridge, following a council discussion on an alternative modular steel bridge design.

Director of public works, Rob Camelon, presented an updated proposal at last week's council meeting for a modular steel deck bridge, the same style initially considered but narrower than a previous expensive option. The new option was projected to save the municipality "six-figures" on the structure alone.

While the bridge deck is proving more cost-effective, the foundation remains a point of concern. Camelon noted the soil conditions in the park require digging down approximately five feet, creating a challenge due to the high water table.

The vendor initially suggested a shallow foundation, but Camelon said that the municipal engineer is running numbers to determine a viable solution.

"The foundation is still a bit of a question mark in my mind," he noted. "I'm happy to return with some better numbers at the next meeting to better find the sweet spot there."

> ***"I'm happy to return with some better numbers at the next meeting to better find the sweet spot there."***
>
> — Rob Camelon, Dysart

Despite the ongoing foundation study, Mayor Murray Fearrey suggested starting the removal of the old bridge this winter while the ground is frozen, making the demolition process easier.

"It would be nice if we could get the old bridge out of there this winter, when the ground is frozen and not tear everything to pieces," he said.

Council passed a resolution directing staff to "return with detailed costing on a modular steel bridge deck that complies with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act that is suitable for replacement of the Head Lake Park pedestrian footbridge."

The motion signals the council's intention to move forward with the more cost-effective modular design, pending the final foundation and budget numbers.

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Crosswalk talk debates downtown location

from page 1

turning left or southbound on York Street on Highland," he said. "Over the next 10 years, it is expected to get worse, but that is the only warrant at this time."

However, the traffic survey and staff opinion concluded that the need for a pedestrian crossover at the government dock and the Hook is a greater and more immediate concern.

"As noted in the report, everybody that is crossing to go to the restaurant is crossing at the government dock intersection, which is uncontrolled," Camelon told council.

According to the traffic survey, nearly all restaurant-goers crossed directly at the public dock parking lot entrance. Video surveillance confirmed that the concern for accidents is greater at the boat launch intersection than at the York Street intersection.

"What they saw on the video they had up there for a couple of days in the summer, they saw that warrant is higher, there's more of a concern at the intersection of the boat launch and the restaurant than there is at the York Street intersection," Camelon said. "So based on that, they are recommending that a pedestrian crossover be placed at that intersection, which is kind of the opposite of what the last GIS indicated 10 years ago."

The director of public works noted that the two locations are less than 200 metres apart and engineers prefer to keep traffic control devices 200 metres apart to prevent congestion. This presented a conflict between putting lights on York Street and installing a crossover near the dock.

While the overall rehabilitation of Highland Street, from York Street to Gelert Road, would be a larger project for the 2026 mayoral budget, some members pushed to fast-track the crosswalk itself.

"I'd like to see us go to work on the crosswalk now," councillor Pat Casey said. "And then do the street separately... whatever we can do to get it set up and underway, that's what we can focus on now."

Camelon suggested that the crosswalk design could be completed relatively quickly, "once we can finalize what we are looking for," and estimated the cost to be roughly $100,000.

Taylor Pridham, co-owner of Hook Line & Sinker, welcomed the idea of a crosswalk in front of his establishment, noting that the lack of a nearby crosswalk had been a long-standing concern for both his business and the general public.

"I'm very happy to hear that it's something that's under consideration and possible construction," he said in an interview last week. "I know it's something that's been talked about over the years, even when [the restaurant] was Baked and Battered, how it's been a concern of either patrons or just the general public as they try to reach across from the street just onto this side and to go, not only to our business, but others along this side of the road."

> ***"There's been at least four or five different accidents right in front of the restaurant here ..."***
>
> – Taylor Pridham, co–owner of Hook Line & Sinker

Pridham noted the dangers of the intersection during peak tourist season.

"Especially in the summer months when the volume and the density of the traffic is so high, it'd be nice to have people slow down a little bit," he said.

Pridham said he had witnessed a handful of traffic accidents over the years, including one pedestrian-involved collision.

"There's been at least four or five different accidents right in front of the restaurant here… There's been like one pedestrian collision last year," noting that police frequently post officers nearby, to catch speeders, "once every couple of weeks."

Pridham said he had previously approached the municipality and even offered to contribute funds for a crosswalk, but the money was eventually allocated elsewhere.

When asked about potential traffic congestion from the crosswalk, the restaurant owner emphasized that safety outweighs the inconvenience.

"I think traffic congestion is something we're dealing with in one sense or another, right?" he said. "They're either trying to run across the street and hold up a hand as someone waits, and it becomes dangerous in that sense, or they're given an opportunity to actually cross safely."

Pridham said he hopes the crosswalk project moves forward, adding that it seems like a more financially sound option than installing new traffic lights.

"I imagine it would be a lot more financially beneficial for a project to take on the crosswalk rather than a new set of traffic lights with similar results," he said.

Council decided to move forward with the design for the full road rehabilitation, including the crossover, but is prioritizing the detailed design and costing immediately for the crosswalk to allow for quick construction. The motion to receive the report and direct staff to provide engineering costs for the project was carried.

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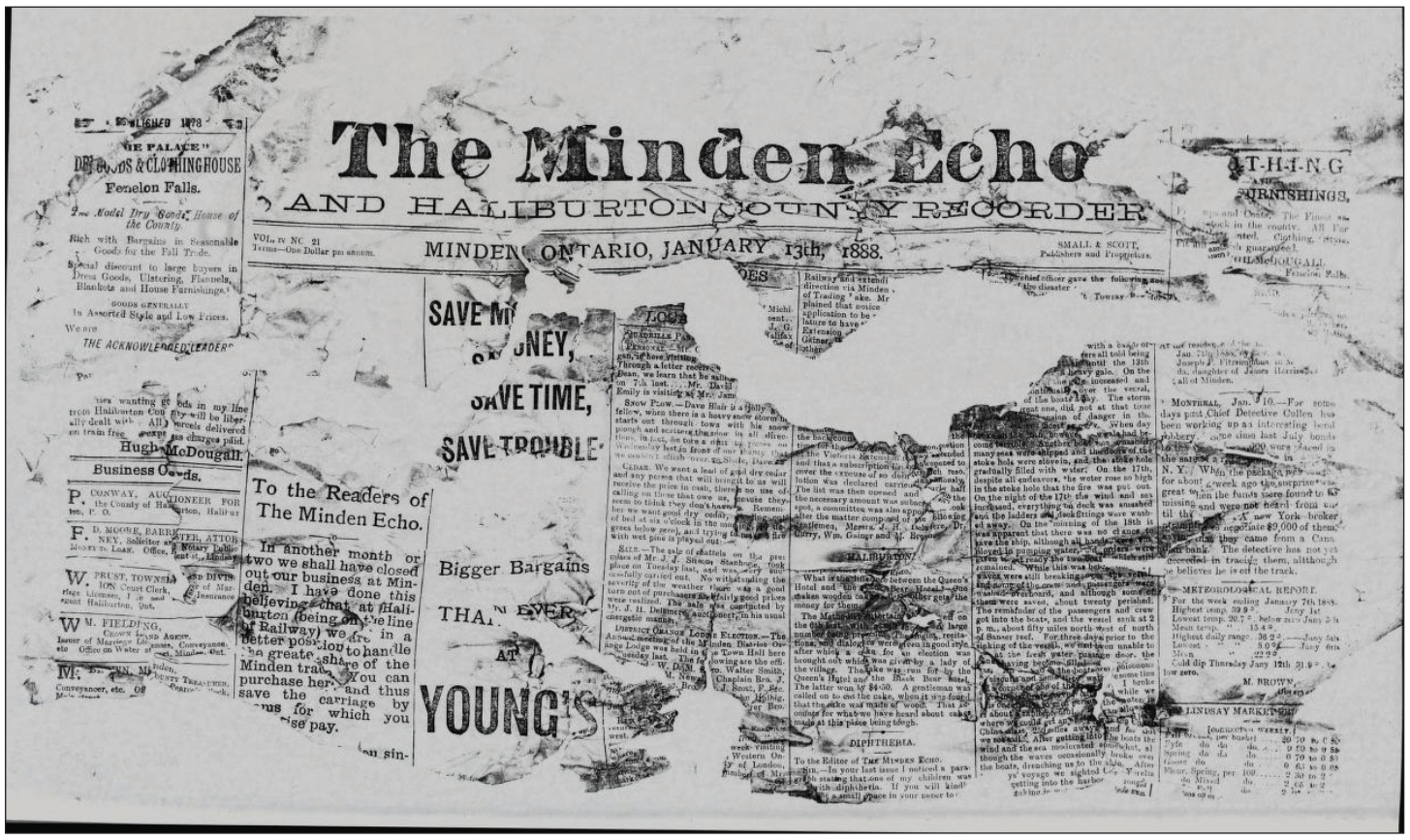
Newspaper archives tap into days gone by

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor


The Minden Echo
AND HALIBURTON COUNTY RECORDER
MINDEN, ONTARIO, JANUARY 13th, 1888.
To the Readers of The Minden Echo.
SAVE MONEY, SAVE TIME, SAVE TROUBLE
Bigger Bargains THAN EVER AT YOUNG'S

The holidays are a time of year where we connect, we share stories, and we look to the past.

And this year, thanks to the newly digitized newspaper archives, there is a tool available for all to connect with the stories of our community.

The Haliburton Highlands Digital Archives (HHDA) project has been in the works for over two years. With a hard launch taking place this past fall, the online platform has stored over 7000 newspapers from our community, dating back to the year 1888; an edition of the *Minden Echo*, seen to the right.

The 7,000 issues equates to over 170,000 pages of scanned materials. With the scanning completed by MES Hybrid Document Systems, project coordinator Ted Brandon shared that the committee is "over the moon" with the quality of the scans. "They really did the project, not like they were a contractor, but like it was their own project," he said, noting the high-end resolution that allows the search function of the site to work on the thousands of editions. "It really allows people to narrow in on those details."

While some internet archives have a cost associated with accessing the files, the Haliburton Highlands Digital Archives are entirely free. The site can be accessed by searching www.hhda.ca, where the entire available collection resides. Once in the site, there is a search option along the top of the page. Brandon noted that it is key to select the "search text contents" toggle, as opposed to the default "search metadata" option.

The text contents allows the search function to seek any key words you may be looking for. Another tip is to add quotation marks around key words you are seeking, that allows the search function to hone in with greater detail.

"I think it's important that we ensure all these newspapers are saved," noted Brandon, referencing the many papers featured in the collection, including the *Haliburton Echo*, the *Minden Times*, the *Highlander*, and the many iterations of each paper that evolved over the years. "But it's equally as important that the public has easy access to it. It's about preserving our history."

Brandon shared that since the fall launch, the public has been excited about access to the online resource. "The people who seem to be most excited are former reporters," he laughed. "But it's all been very positive, especially with the ease of use."

While the collection contains over 170,000 pages, Brandon noted that there are still some gaps. The committee is currently seeking papers from prior to the year 1980. If anyone has old collections stowed away, he encourages folks to reach out to www.hhda.ca, where they can connect with a committee member about their findings.

And while they continue their search for papers of days gone by, Brandon is also looking to the future. "The goal is to keep the archive as up to date as possible," he said, noting that once a month, current editions of local newspapers will be scanned and added to the archives. "Often we remember about 10 per cent of any event," he laughed. "It's great to look back and see the whole picture."

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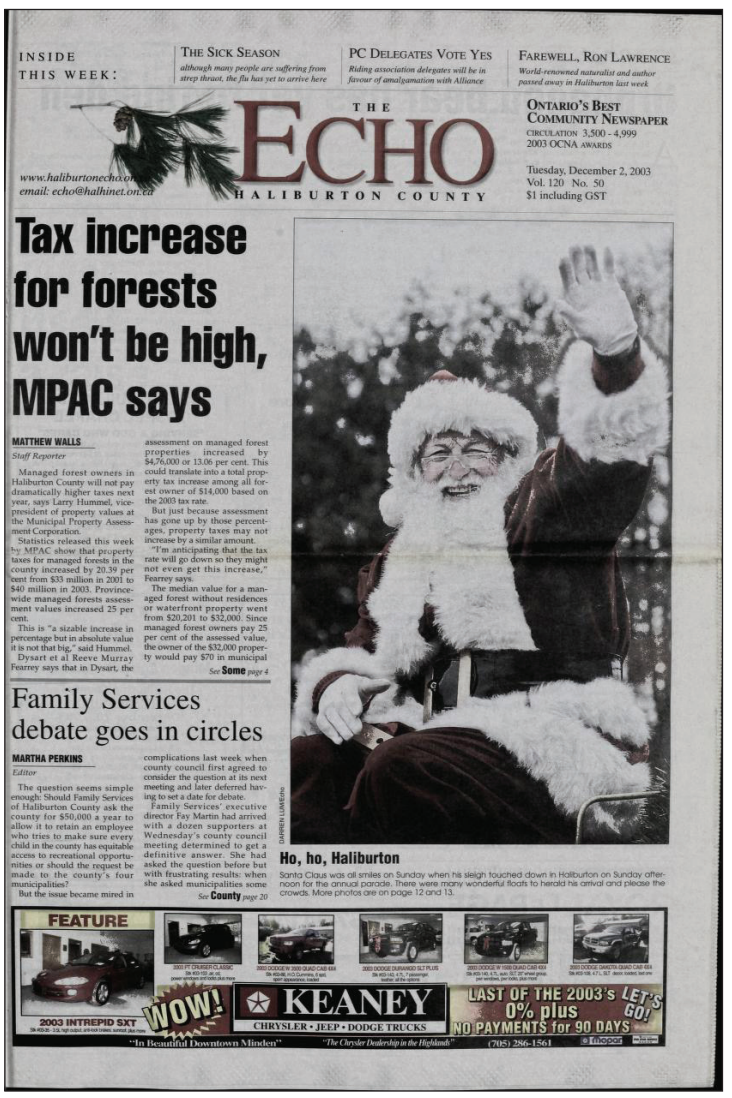
THE ECHO
HALIBURTON COUNTY
Tuesday, December 2, 2003
Vol. 120 No. 50
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Tax increase for forests won't be high, MPAC says
Family Services debate goes in circles
Ho, ho, Haliburton

Executive Director of HHHS Foundation Melanie Klodt Wong and David Blodgett, the chair of the board, pose with Timber the Wolf, the new furry friend of the foundation. /submitted

HHHSF welcomes Timber to the team

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

> *"The biggest part is the awareness in the community, plus, it brings a nice hug to someone in the community as well ..."*
>
> — Melanie Klodt Wong, HHHSF

There's a new face in town for the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF), and he's extra cute.

Timber the Eastern Wolf - this year's stuffed animal for the foundation - can be found at Foodland in Haliburton and Minden, Independent in Haliburton, CIBC in Minden, and Bank of Montreal in Haliburton.

"We live in the wild, beautiful world of Haliburton," said Melanie Klodt Wong, the executive director of the foundation. So for the last little while, we've been focusing on local animals."

Many would recall seeing "Quilbur", a lovable porcupine stuffed animal, which was the featured creature last year. This year, with their featured animal as a regional wolf species, the HHHSF also paired up with Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve, and will be selling Timber from the Kennisis Lake site as well.

"What this really does is raise awareness," said Klodt Wong. "It's a fundraiser for the foundation, but the biggest part is the awareness in the community, plus, it brings a nice hug to someone in the community as well."

She shared that the cozy critters are often shared with local long term care homes, and bring joy and comfort to many across the region and beyond. "I really love them," Klodt Wong chuckled. "Some people will come in and say they collect them every year."

The stuffed animal fundraising program has been going on since 2006, with a different animal selected each year. At the Haliburton hospital site, a display has been set up featuring each critter over the years, with a puzzle capturing the full class picture of all of them together. "We are building up enough for the next class picture," said Klodt Wong.

The animals are $30, with all proceeds going directly back to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation, which is an incorporated registered Canadian charity that financially supports the hospital and health care facilities in Haliburton County for capital projects, equipment, education programs and community support services.

While the Provincial Government funds the buildings and portions of physician recruitment, healthcare equipment programming is reliant entirely on fundraising initiatives and community support.

If a stuffed animal isn't of interest to anyone on your Christmas list, Klodt Wong also suggested looking into the foundation's lottery tickets. "We will write the Christmas cards and put the tickets in the cards," she said, noting that the final draw will take place just after Christmas.

For more information around any fundraising efforts made by the foundation, please call 705-457-1580.

"Make sure you pick up Timber while they last," said Klodt Wong, noting that the stuffed animals fly off the shelves, and are only around in limited numbers. "We ran out before Thanksgiving last time, so we can't always guarantee that they'll stick around."

Kinmount bursary program supports local students

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

If you have not attended college or university, you may not know the struggles that students face.

Attending school, you are often away from home for the first time, you need to cook your own meals, figure out transportation, and live in a city with Starbucks taller than the biggest building in your home town.

The stress of paying for everything you need accompanies the new feeling of isolation.

Luckily, if you are a resident of Kinmount and the 15 kilometre surrounding area, the Kinmount Educational Bursary exists to alleviate some financial strain.

The bursary program, which was first offered in the fall of 2013, was formed to support Kinmount residents looking to continue their education. All candidates are considered for the bursary, whether you are a mature student, venturing to secondary school for the first time, or entering your final year of study.

For students to qualify for the bursary, students must apply for OSAP. After checking a student's address, receiving a list of courses and a letter of acceptance from their institution, local students can receive $500 per semester, for up to a maximum of six semesters.

Thomas Munns is in the third year of his bachelor of engineering program at Ontario Tech University.

A recipient of the Kinmount Educational Bursary, Munns says that the bursary has been a stress reliever for paying for groceries.

"Now that I am away, that is what I put the bursary towards," said Munns.

Munns learned of the bursary through his father, Todd Munns, who is involved with the council for the Kinmount and District Health Centre.

Munns says that while he is attending school in Oshawa, he misses the nature and community in Kinmount.

"I miss living on the lake," said Munns. "It is easy to relax and unwind."

Munns says that he is enjoying his studies, despite the busy schedule. In the summers, he returned to work at Balsam Lake Provincial Park. This upcoming year, he hopes to work a co-op job through his school program.

While Munns is not certain what his dream job would be, he says that he greatly enjoys working with computer aided designs and designing models.

Sue Crawford is another beneficiary of the Kinmount Educational Bursary. Crawford was a mature student when she learned about the funding opportunity.

As both a mother and a personal support worker working in long-term care, Crawford sought a change to better herself and her family.

"It gets hard on the heart," said Crawford. "I still wanted to help people but in a different way."

> *"Going back to school was the best choice I have ever made ... just do it. Follow your dreams and go for it.*
>
> — Sue Crawford, Kinmount

Crawford was aware of the program, having had a hand in fundraising for the bursary years before. It was during the COVID-19 pandemic that Crawford decided to apply to a social worker program, offered through Fleming College in Peterborough.

As a married mature student with dependent children, Crawford says that the bursary came in very handy to cover the essentials that people would not think of. Things like her propane bills, food for her family.

"Going back to school was the best choice I have ever made," said Crawford. "Just do it. Follow your dreams and go for it."

While some people may have hesitations regarding going back to school, Crawford encourages everyone to look into it.

If you are in school already, she advises students to look into any accommodations you may need during your studies, and to keep a line of clear communications between yourself and your educators. Often schools are very understanding and accommodating to students' needs.

After graduating, Crawford worked as a case manager for a safe consumption site in Peterborough.

While working with those with substance use issues, Crawford saw change first hand through setting people up with housing, offering cognitive behavioural therapy, and helped many ease off of their reliances to substances.

In March of this year, the safe supply site in Peterborough was canned by Doug Ford's government.

By the day the program was shut down, Crawford says that 75 per cent of her clients had ceased using substances.

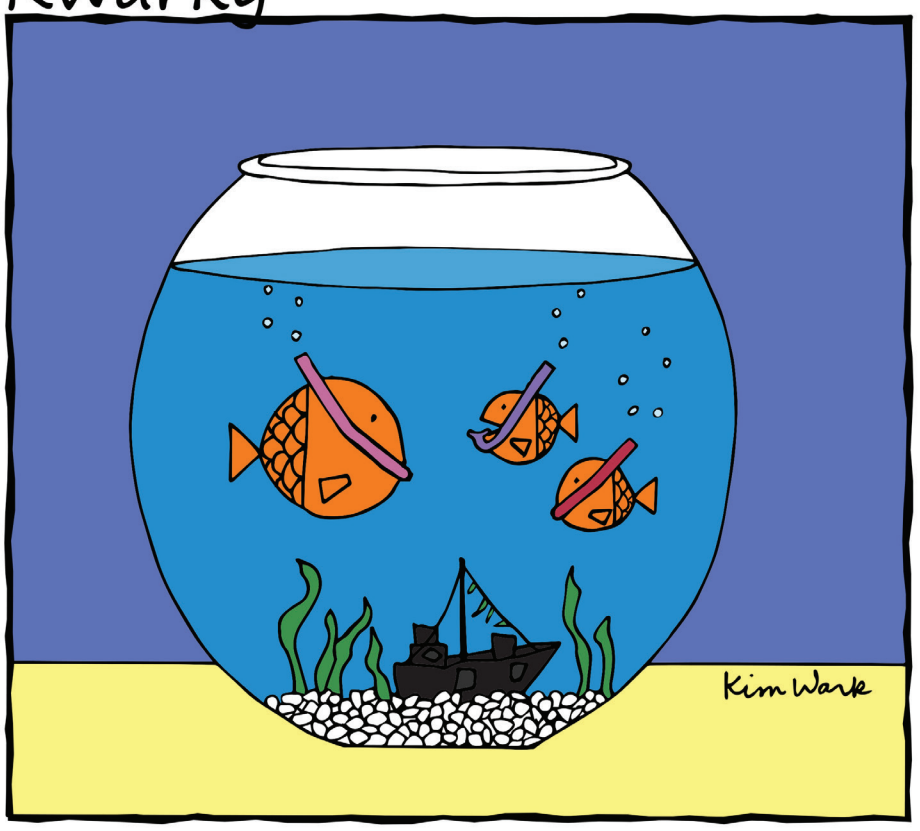
If you are someone that has been looking at going back to school and living near Kinmount, consider applying to the bursary if you need it.

If you are wanting to support the bursary, the bursary committee will gladly accept mailed cheques. Cheques can be mailed to 1016 Thurston Road, Box 17, Kinmount, K0M2A0. All donations received will be given a receipt.

Songs of the season

The Highlands Festival Singers performed selections from Handel's *Messiah* at the United Church in Haliburton as part of the choir's December concerts.
/ADAM FRISK staff

Kwarky



"Mom, no! Not another staycation snorkelling shipwrecks in a tropical paradise."

Brought to you by

SUDOKU

			2			5		7
				3	5	9		
						4	3	
	2		4				6	
				9	2	7		
		3	9	1	4	6		5
8		4	7					
		9	6					

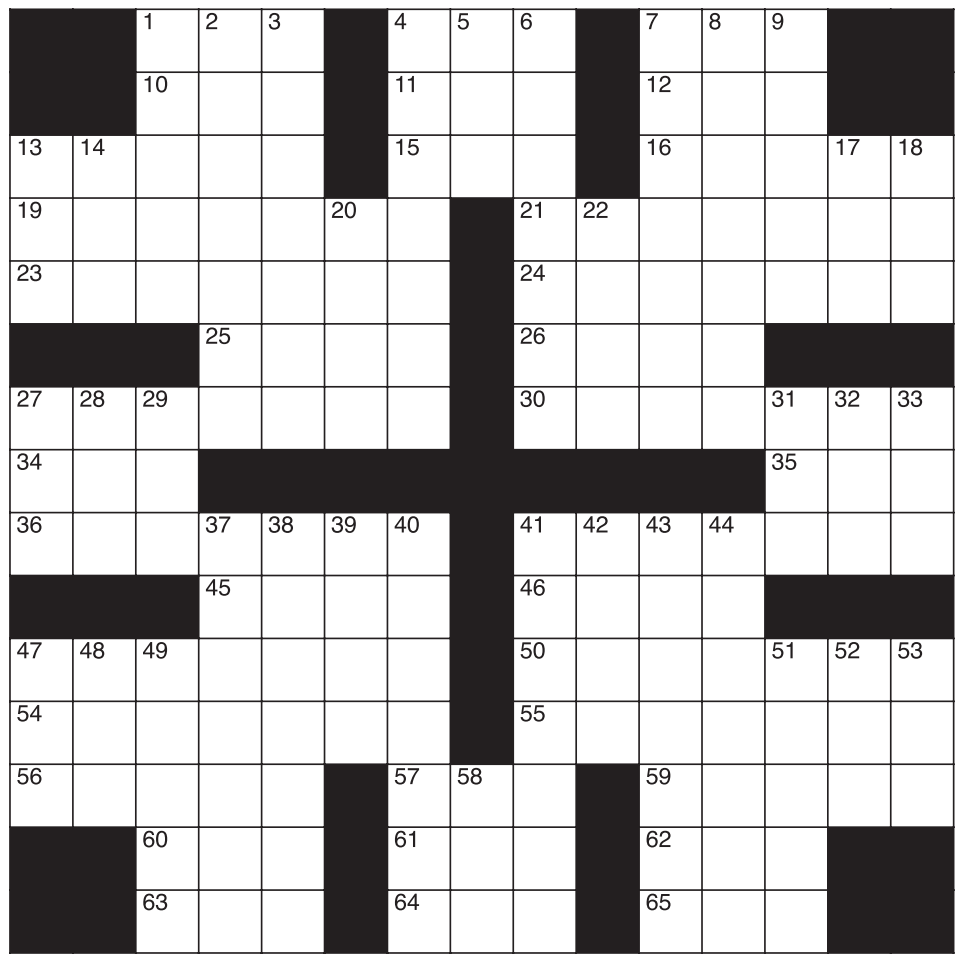
Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 19



CLUES ACROSS
1. American automotive titan
4. Tire term
7. Two-year-old sheep
10. Indigenous people of Thailand
11. Anti-Soviet Cold War group
12. Actress de Armas
13. Not moving
15. Cool!
16. Plants of the arum family
19. Connected with touch
21. Pen stain
23. Monetary units
24. School kidsÕ art project
25. Early Bell Canada executive
26. Sword
27. Hates
30. Fixed in one place
34. Pie _ __ mode
35. Moved swiftly on foot
36. Carrier on vehicle
41. A path to get through
45. ÒRule, BritanniaÓ composer
46. Spiritual leader
47. Flowing
50. Respectful compliments
54. Cure
55. Soft, lightweight fabric
56. Building material
57. Japanese delicacy
59. A way to cause to be swollen
60. One and only
61. You might get one in summer
62. Wreath
63. Thus far
64. They __
65. Employee reference number

CLUES DOWN
1. Policemen (French)
2. Toy dog
3. Intestinal condition
4. Muscular weaknesses
5. Helps little firms
6. Alphabetical lists
7. Takes down
8. Facilitates
9. Ethnic people of Ethiopia
13. Engine additive
14. Explorers group
17. Written account
18. Consumed
20. Opposite of first
22. No (slang)
27. Government lawyers
28. NY Giants great
29. Small amount
31. A way to save for your future
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. Head pain
38. Wildly popular sport
39. ÒPrincess DiariesÓ actress Hathaway
40. Boat race
41. About fish
42. Nursemaid
43. Able to be marketed
44. Not as large
47. Parts per billion (abbr.)
48. Paddle
49. Oneness
51. Bitter chemical
52. Not around
53. Very fast airplane
58. Main tributary of the Rhine

Answers on page 19

Rebecca Wallace holds a sourdough loaf at the first annual Keller's Yule market at the Lion's Club in Minden.

Bonnie Marshall poses for a photo while at her booth.

Despite the snow coming down, excited guests still came out to the first annual Keller Yule Market

A Keller Christmas

From left, Taylor Keller, founder of Minden's Yule Market holds her baby Dominic besides her mother Carolyn, and Victoria Jones. Despite the healthy dumping of snow, the hall was filled with those looking for the perfect Christmas gift. /THOMAS SMITH staff

Lakelands Public Health offering free radon test kits

Radon, an invisible gas, is the second-leading cause of lung cancer in Canada. Lakelands Public Health is pleased to be offering 750 free radon test kits to community members this year, as part of the Evict Radon National Study. Community members who receive a kit must agree to be a part of the study, set up the device for at least 91 days, and then send the kit (pre-paid envelope included) to be analyzed.

"The Lakelands Public Health region has been identified as priority for the researchers at Evict Radon – not necessarily because there are high levels of radon in our area, but because there is insufficient data about the radon levels in our area," said Dr. Thomas Piggott, Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer at Lakelands Public Health. "The study results will help us learn more about radon levels in our community to support future programming so that we can work with municipalities to better understand and mitigate local risks," he added.

What is Radon?

Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas that comes from the breakdown of uranium found in rocks and soil. It can seep into cracks, gaps, and openings in a home's foundation. When radon enters confined spaces, like a house, it can build up and become harmful.

Radon is invisible, odourless, and tasteless, so testing is the only way to know how much radon is in one's home and whether action is needed. When inhaled, radon traps radioactive particles in the lungs. This creates damage and, over years, can develop into lung cancer. In Canada, radon is the second-leading cause of lung cancer – after tobacco smoke.

Where Can I Get a Kit?

Test kits are limited to one per household and must be picked up by a person who lives in the residence. Test kits are available while quantities last, and will be distributed "first come, first served". Starting on Dec. 15, 2025, radon test kits can be picked up at:

Northumberland County, Haliburton County, and the City of Kawartha Lakes:

Local public libraries

County of Peterborough:

Local municipal offices

City of Peterborough:

Lakelands Public Health – Peterborough Office, 3rd Floor, 185 King Street

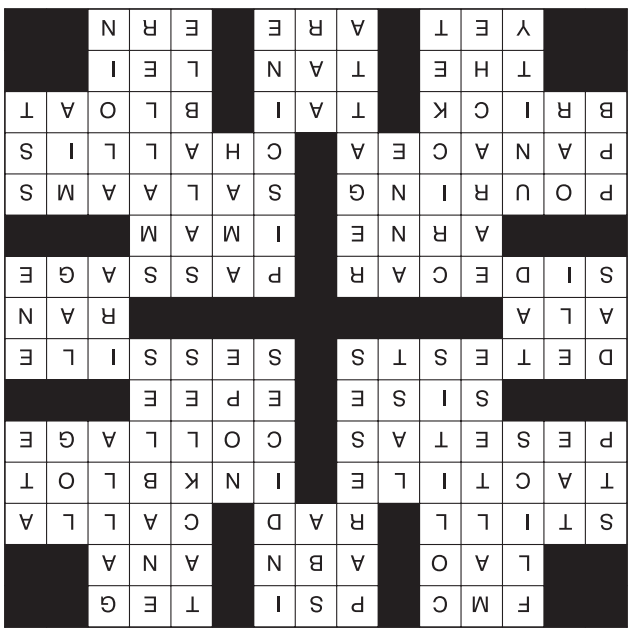
Distribution locations are subject to change, and new locations may be added. Visit LakelandsPH.ca/radon or contact our office to determine the location closest to you. Community members of Alderville First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, or Hiawatha First Nation who are interested in participating in the Evict Radon National Study are invited to contact Lakelands Public Health for more information.

More Information

Radon kits can also be purchased from EvictRadon.org. To learn more about the health effects of radon, visit LakelandsPH.ca/radon.

Submitted

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



SUDOKU SOLUTION

6	3	8	2	4	9	5	1	7
5	9	2	1	7	6	8	4	3
7	4	1	8	3	5	9	2	6
9	8	7	5	6	1	4	3	2
3	2	5	4	8	7	1	6	9
4	1	6	3	9	2	7	5	8
2	7	3	9	1	4	6	8	5
8	6	4	7	5	3	2	9	1
1	5	9	6	2	8	3	7	4

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Newly renovated 2-unit house on 9.5 scenic acres near Haliburton. LOWER: 1-bed, 1-bath. Features open-concept living, new appliances, in-unit laundry and outdoor living spaces. 10 minutes from Haliburton & perfect for peaceful living. Contact: info@aboveboardcarpentry.com **705-455-2196**

Cozy Older Home for Rent
2+ bedrooms. Large kitchen, large Livingroom, Dining room, sunroom and Full unfinished basement. $2000+ oil and wood heat, and Hydro. **Contact 647-768-7722**

Large one-bedroom apartment available for rent January 1st. Single, mature, non-smoking tenants preferred. Fully furnished. Includes water access, private entrance, and 400 sq foot screened porch. 10 minute drive from Haliburton. $1700 per month. Includes hydro, heat, wifi, and parking. Please call 705-457-0861. Pictures available upon request.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Minden Community Food Centre

WE ARE HIRING
Manager, Minden Community Food Centre

We are an accredited food bank under Food Banks Canada and are looking for a manager to run our operations in Minden, Ontario. This full-time position requires an individual with

- Proven experience in nonprofit or community leadership, ideally in food insecurity or social services
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- Good verbal and written communication skills and familiarity with social media
- Ability to navigate difficult situations and provide guidance as needed relating to visitors, staff, and volunteers
- Ability to multitask, delegate, and work under pressure at certain times
- Possess excellent communication and relationship-building abilities
- A commitment to equity, inclusion, and community development

A detailed job description can be found at www.mindencommunityfoodcentre.ca/joinus.
The annual salary of $48,300 is based on 35 hours per week.

The application deadline is January 15, 2026. Please send your resume and cover letter to: chair@mindencommunityfoodcentre.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest; only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The Corporation of the County of Haliburton Requires a Community Safety and Well-Being Coordinator

Under the oversight of the Director, this vacant full-time position conducts research and supports program outcomes through the application of cross-sector partnerships, collective impact planning and principles, and community engagement and training. Further, this position supports the communication efforts of community service providers to raise awareness among residents of available support programs.

The successful applicant will have completed post-secondary education in a related discipline and possess a minimum four years of progressive experience. Applicants with a comparable combination of education and experience will also be considered.

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for a more detailed posting and job description.

Please forward your resume to shume@haliburtoncounty.ca no later than January 2, 2026, at 4:30pm.

We thank all who apply for this position; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The County of Haliburton is an equal opportunity employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.

In accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

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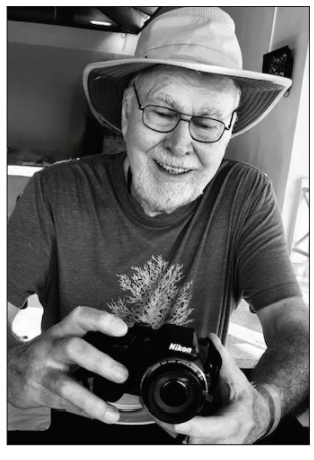

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OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of
Bailey, Cecil Wesley

Cec, Dad, Papa (uncle Bill from Tory Hill) was born on July 16, 1924 to W.O. Bailey and Elsie Bailey (Martin) passed away peacefully on December 4, 2025 at the age 101.

Cecil was pre-deceased by his wife Irene (2016), and his son Clark (1990). He is lovingly remembered by daughter Linda Pearl (Bob),his grandchildren Curtis and Tim (Kris) and great-grandchildren, Cecily, Max, Levi, and Adalea. He was also predeceased by his siblings, Merrill, Lloyd, Lorne, and Lois. Ever remembered by his extended family the Bailey's, Cruikshank's, and Wood's.

A long time resident of Halliburton Cec was a World War II veteran who served with the RCAF from 1942 to 1945 taking part in the landing at Juno Beach and the liberation of the Netherlands. He carried those memories with humility and a quiet pride throughout his life. A jack of all trades, he built every home he lived in, he was a proud member of the Halliburton Royal Canadian Legion. Cec married his beloved Irene and favourite dance partner in 1949 and together they created a home known for it's always open door, to friends, family, neighbors, and even the on duty OPP officers would stop by for coffee, conversation, and Cec's antics. Remembered for his love of vintage country music, his dance moves, and his trademark, "Here's to your sister" toasts.

As he takes his final bow after a long rich life filled with music, mischief, and love, we send him off with a country style, Good Night.

So here's to you, Cec as your final song plays low, you've hung up your dancing shoes and your hammer too, and it's time for you to go. We will keep your story spinning like your old cassette show, till we meet again, keep dancing on the far side of the radio. Online condolences at www.tompkinsfuneralhome.ca

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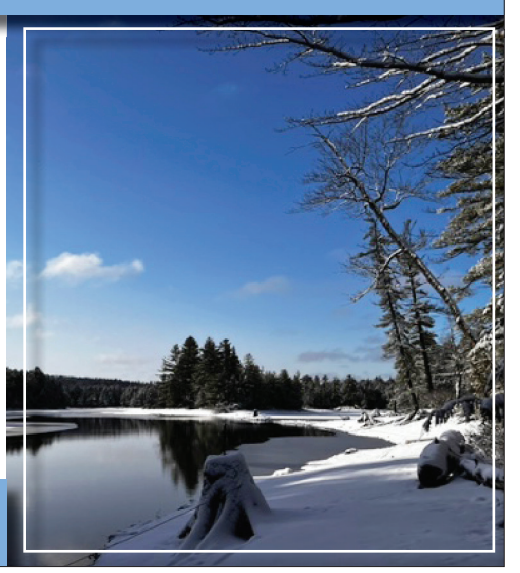

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THE HALIBURTON COUNTY
ECHO
The Voice of the Highlands since 1884
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1997 Vol. 115, No. 44 • 36 PAGES 90 cents (incl. GST)

Downloading costs may not be as bad as once feared

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

That rattling at your window panes isn't from the winter winds.

It's from the collective sigh of relief municipal officials are letting out now that the provincial government has lightened the financial load of services it will transfer to them in the new year.

"It looks a lot more optimistic for taxpayers than it did a month ago," said Dysart Reeve and County Warden Murray Fearrey. "... I'm much more optimistic than I was that we can stabilize taxes."

On Friday Finance Minister Ernie Eves released the province's figures for the costs downloading responsibility for some services to municipalities, such as welfare, policing social housing and child care, in return for assuming most of the costs of education.

Based on preliminary numbers released in the fall, county politicians and administrators had been bracing themselves for a huge financial hit.

They anticipated the need to hike taxes by up to 25 per cent in some cases to pay for the millions of dollars in new services they were being given.

But municipalities should be able to avoid those drastic increases with the help of provincial financial assistance outlined by Eves last week.

While the exact figures haven't yet been worked out, it appears the government will give the county and the 10 municipalities "several millions of dollars" in funding next year to help handle their new responsibilities, said Les Shepherd, the county's chief administrative officer.

However, the government is expecting municipalities to chip in with some assistance, as well.

To make the swap of services revenue neutral, as pledged by the province from the beginning, municipalities are being ordered to cut $565-million from their budgets next year.

Locally, each municipal council will have to reduce their overall spending by 1.7 per cent.

Provided they make the

See COUNCILS page 24

A PERFECT ANGEL: Aliccia McEachern was one of the performers in Sunday night's delightful Christmas Concert by Lakeside Baptist Church. We'll have more photos from the evening in next week's Christmas Greetings supplement. Next week The Echo comes out a day early, on Monday, Dec. 22.

The toll roads will ring only for the Lions Club

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

Dysart council has lowered the gate on fundraiser toll booths for all but one group on the municipality's roads.

The Haliburton Lions Club, the first community group to organize the tolls in Dysart, has been granted exclusive rights to continue the fundraising activity annually on one day over the civic holiday weekend in August.

PRICE: 84 cents plus GST = 90 cents

Spurred by the success the Lions enjoyed, a growing number of associations and groups applied to the municipality to hold the tolls during summer long weekends.

Last August the Haliburton Minor Hockey Association beat the Lions to the civic holiday weekend and raised about $3,000 at a volunteer toll set up on Highway 118, just below town.

The Lions held a similar toll for the Labour Day weekend.

The Haliburton County Search and Rescue association also applied to hold a toll. But when it learned council was considering putting a ban on the prac-

See LIONS page 21

DOUG HODGSON

His commitment to education in Haliburton County means he leaves an enduring legacy

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

Haliburton County's unofficial "minister of education" left an enduring legacy, both during his 15 years as the county's first director of education, and in the 13 years since his retirement in 1984.

If children today are benefitting from a high quality of education, then the foundation for such success rests in large part with J. Douglas Hodgson, who died at Haliburton Hospital on December 11. It was his commitment to ensuring that the children of Haliburton County received an education equal to that of children in larger centres which made his stamp on local education so strong and abiding.

"I wanted kids here to have a better education than I had had," he said in a conversation with The Echo in September, just a few days before the Haliburton school which was re-named in his honour celebrated its 25th anniversary. "I wanted them to have the same opportunities as

See HODGSONS page 4

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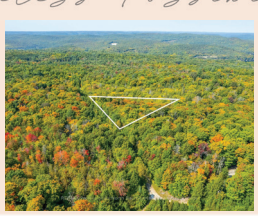

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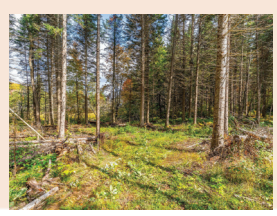

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